

New Jersey State Board of Architects

consumer**brief**

The New Jersey State Board of Architects was created in 1902, making it the second-oldest licensing board in the State, the Board of Pharmacy having been founded in 1901. The New Jersey State Board of Architects was created to serve the citizens of New Jersey by preserving and protecting the public's health, safety and welfare through its work to ensure that architectural services are provided only by licensed professionals who meet the highest standards of training and competence established by the laws of this State.

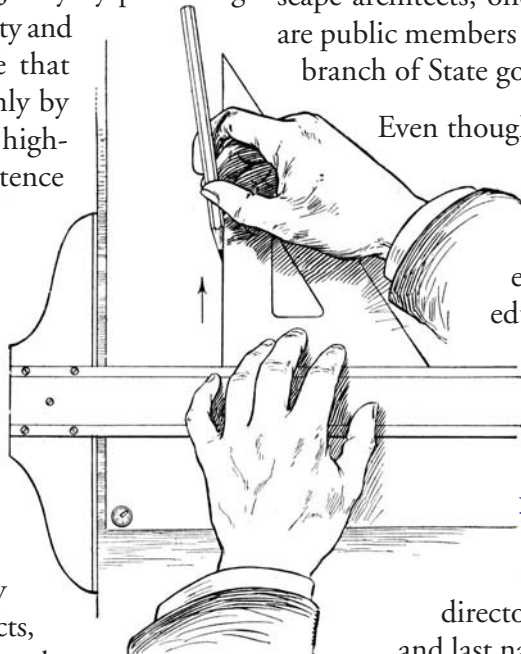
GETTING A LICENSE

For those who seek licensure as an architect in New Jersey, the Board has established standards for education, experience and examinations. The Board makes sure that prospective licensees meet the high standards it has established. Once an individual has been issued a license by the New Jersey State Board of Architects, the Board sees to it that licensees meet the requirements of continuing education to enhance their knowledge and to be up-to-date on new developments in the field. In addition, the Board protects the welfare of the public by imposing disciplinary sanctions when it deems necessary due to the violation of a statute or regulation.

WHO'S ON THE BOARD?

The Board comprises 13 members, all of whom are chosen by the governor and approved by the State Senate for

a five-year term (the terms of the Board members are staggered to ensure smooth operations over the long term). Seven Board members are licensed (also sometimes referred to as being registered) architects, two are licensed landscape architects, one is a certified interior designer, two are public members and one is a member of the executive branch of State government.



Even though Board staff may NOT recommend a particular architect to you, there are several steps that you can take to make sure that an architect you are considering using has obtained the necessary education and training. If you have access to the Internet, you can go to the Board's Web site to check whether that architect has a license and if it is in good standing. Go to www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov/arch and click on the link for licensee information. Then click on licensee

directory. Once you enter the licensee's first and last names, and the city where he/she practices, hit the enter button. You'll find out if the license is in good standing and whether any disciplinary action has been taken against that licensee by the Board. If you do not have a friend or family member from whom you can get a recommendation to use a particular architect, you can go to the Yellow Pages or use the Internet to contact a professional organization such as the American Institute of Architects (A.I.A.) and they will recommend a licensed architect who practices in your area.

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Office of the Attorney General



New Jersey Division of
**Consumer
Affairs**

WHAT LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE ARE REQUIRED TO BECOME A LICENSED ARCHITECT IN THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY?

To become a licensed (registered) architect in New Jersey, an applicant must acquire the appropriate level of education and experience. Prospective licensees must have earned either a Bachelor of Architecture or a Master of Architecture degree from an institution of higher learning accredited by the National Architecture Accrediting Board (N.A.A.B.). If the applicant earned his/her bachelor's degree or master's degree outside the United States, the applicant must submit his/her transcript to Educational Credential Evaluators Inc. or to the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) which must provide assurances that the foreign degree is substantially equivalent to a Bachelor of Architecture or Master of Architecture degree earned from an accredited college or university here in the United States.

Anyone in training to become a licensed architect must take part in what is called the Intern Development Program, which is managed by NCARB, to ensure that every prospective licensee acquires at least three (3) years of experience. The Board is proud of the fact that the original Intern Development Program was developed many years ago here in New Jersey, and that program is now used as a model in jurisdictions throughout the country.

The New Jersey State Board of Architects has the authority to discipline licensees if they should fail to meet the standards of professional conduct or to comply with any of the requirements set forth by law or regulation.

The Board also has the authority to issue licenses to those it deems to be qualified to be licensed landscape architects. In addition, the Board oversees the activities of the Interior Design Examination and Evaluation Committee which certifies interior designers to ensure that these individuals have at least a minimum of professional competence.

HOW DO I FILE A COMPLAINT IF I NEED TO?

If a consumer has reason to file a complaint about an architect, landscape architect or an interior designer, a complaint form can be easily downloaded and printed out from the Board's Web site, filled out and mailed to the Board with **photocopies** of the contract and all other relevant documents. If the problem involves a dispute over fees, the matter will be referred to the Division of Consumer Affairs' Alternative Dispute Resolution Unit, which

conducts mediation sessions (not arbitration) which are not binding. This unit of the Division has been quite successful in mediating and subsequently resolving disputes before the parties need to go before an administrative law judge. Every complaint filed with the Board is investigated, but only after the consumer who has filed the complaint has been asked to provide detailed information about the situation. The investigation may take several months. After the Board deliberates, a majority of the Board's members make a decision. This decision may be appealed, first to the Board itself and then to the Office of Administrative Law.

If a dispute should arise between an architect and an engineer, the matter is dealt with by the Joint Committee of Architects and Engineers.

Remember that if you are trying to find a licensed architect, getting a recommendation from a friend or family member who has experience with a particular architect is a good idea. If you need an architect and see a building that you like, you can find out who designed that building and contact that architect's firm. Once you have the names of a few architects who you may want to retain, go to the Web page cited on the previous page and follow the instructions there so that you can check to see if each of the architects you've entered into the licensee directory has a valid license in good standing and whether any disciplinary action is on his or her record.

New Jersey homeowners should be aware that they may purchase prepared, commercially published architectural plans to be used by the homeowner's builder, but only if those plans have been reviewed and approved by an architect licensed by the New Jersey State Board of Architects. This is permitted by law under what is referred to as the "single-family exemption."

IN CONCLUSION

The Board is here to ensure that all licensed architects, landscape architects and interior designers have the required levels of education and experience. The protection of the public's health, safety and welfare when dealing with these professionals is the continuing and overriding goal of the New Jersey State Board of Architects.

